

metrical harmony. For I can recollect no single form of lines, any triangle or polygon, which by itself gives one the idea of beauty, which is inseparably with harmoniously joined curves.

Although the obtuse angle in itself appears weak and ugly, yet when it is formed into an obtuse-angled triangle, as in a pediment, this disappears; and the more obtuse, according to the Greek practice, consistently with the whole mass, the more did it fall in with the prevailing character of their intention—the beautiful; and the more obtuse these angles become, the more do they assimilate to the form of the circle, as seen in the octagon, for instance; and certainly we should admire that outline as a pier ornament more than we should a tetragon.

Straight lines, without the aid of curves, are incapable, it would seem, of producing actual beauty; but they are capable of producing actual picturesqueness, as before mentioned, and become fanciful and charming in the mosaic work of the Moors and ancient Christians. Straight lines, then, are aids for certain developments of the beautiful, seen especially in architecture, and curves are aids to the picturesque.

Straight lines are not indispensable to beauty, and cannot produce it, but they produce picturesqueness, whose characteristic is irregularity: this is certainly true, but they produce also regularity, which constitutes one of the architect's principal means of pleasing the eye. The square is the only regular and perfect form bounded by right lines, and from this does the architect work out proportion. Now, the proportion made by right lines alone, as of columns, in the elementary works on architecture, can be nothing more than good, excellent, well-proportioned, whatever expression of that nature you like,—never beautiful. For excellence of proportion is not beauty, though one of its attributes in certain cases. A double square may be more pleasing than a single one, as an aperture, but to call it beautiful would be to call it what it is not. The proportions of a room are never beautiful, but excellent. Nor can right lines, or straight lines, in themselves, or in forming squares, or in any combination whatever with themselves, produce beauty. The chief power of straight lines consists in their irregularity; and then, in irregularity, unproductive of beauty, which must have at least a predominance of curved outlines. That which is not beautiful in itself cannot produce beauty by any combination with itself, but it may and does, in this case, assimilate to beauty. All we can say of such forms is, that they are well adapted to their particular purposes. Proportion certainly bears an analogous character to beauty and grace, but, in itself, this analogous character or quality is not strongly marked.

The adjustment of lines, then, in any combinations with themselves alone, does not produce beauty, and should be carefully separated, therefore, from the idea of beauty. But the assimilating power contained in the simplest combination and division of right lines, as shown in the square, may be exemplified by this,—that the square itself is simply strong. The double square assimilates well with beauty, more than the double square with grace, and less than the true square with clumsiness. Inasmuch, then, as there is an analogy of proportion, we may not unjustly say, beautifully or gracefully proportioned.

The nearest approach to what one might term beauty as formed by straight lines, is to be found in some of the Moorish and Byzantine geometrical mosaics. This is, however, the glory of actual regularity in apparent irregularity, and the mind is delighted by weaving out an ingenious system of order from apparent confusion.

Variety and irregularity—words which have just frequently occurred, though constantly confounded by writers—are two different things. We should, I think, call the outline of the human body the most varied, whilst we should call the outline of an oak one of the most irregular. The curve can produce both variety and irregularity,—the straight line only one, irregularity. The continuous variety of the curve produces beauty. Its incontinuous variety, which is truly irregularity, and the irregularity of straight lines, picturesqueness. When one lays it down that irregularity is

beauty, it is little less than saying, that straight lines are curves.

The outline of the earth is picturesque in proportion to its irregularity. The outline of animated nature is beautiful in proportion as it is varied. Man, being the most varied, is also the most beautiful. Rocks and trees, being the most irregular, are also the most picturesque.

We cannot be too particular in clearly defining what our words mean; without it we address each other in vain, and this laxness of expression, which confounds beauty with picturesqueness, and variety with irregularity, is destructive of all chance of arriving at truths, wanted in no art or science more than in architecture.

From what has been said, we arrive at the following conclusions:—That there are two fundamental and different means of producing form, viz., curved lines and straight lines. Beauty is that character of form which is produced by varied and continuous curves, and consequently exists in any single curve and is cognate with it. Though straight lines be introduced in combination with them, still beautiful may be predicated of any form in which the continuous curves predominate. It is evident that if curved lines are indispensable to this character, and produce it without other aid, straight lines are not indispensable, and do not produce it without other aid. But straight lines do produce a character which we may define as picturesque. Irregularity has been shown to be its primary feature, therefore, whatever adds to its irregularity adds to its picturesqueness. Now, broken curves are irregular, and perfect picturesqueness is formed of these in conjunction with broken straight lines. And though continuous curves even be combined with them, yet wherever the two former predominate, the picturesque may be predicated. Further, straight lines rectilinearly adjusted produce regularity and proportion, into which bases, the most complicated arrangements of them can be reduced.

There is one character, that of grandeur, which requires our attention. It is independent of curves or angles to any complicated extent, may be formed of either, and being equally producible by right lines, deserves, especially for architects, a place per se. Magnitude and strength, though bounded by the outline of the pyramids or the rainbow alone (a simple semi-circle and triangle) will produce it, and in these cases it requires a very nice perception to see that one is beautifully, the other picturesquely, grand. An immense wall formed at right lines is merely grand. Magnitude and strength are indispensable to its production, and will, by themselves, then, in the simplest possible form—that last mentioned—produce it. In whatever grandeur exists, if the continuous curves predominate, we get the beautifully grand, seen to perfection in colossal statues, less perfectly in some of the English mountains: Helvellyn, for instance, in the rolling waves of the Atlantic, and domes. If the angles predominate, we get the picturesquely grand, as in the outlines of the Alps; Capri, near Naples; a pine forest; the spires and towers of Gothic architecture. We find that in all these last cases, we must use a compound expression clearly to define their character; whereas, in the rainbow and pyramids, independent of colour, we should at once define them as grand. Although, as before observed, they are not solely so in reality, yet the forms are so simple that we can waive the adverb. This being the case, it is evident that a certain degree of monotony is inseparable from the simply grand; and as we have set forth variety as the primary feature of perfect beauty, and irregularity of the perfectly picturesque, so we may consider simplicity a primary feature of the perfectly grand.

To have a definite notion of the difference of each of these qualities is what I have in view, and when once they stand out clearly from each other in the imagination and in fact, it is then time to inquire how they act in conjunction and opposition, and what is the effect so produced.

From what we can imagine of excellence in these qualities, from the examples given us for study, it would seem, on first reflection, that to join the strongly marked features of each quality in one subject, would be fundamentally wrong and actually disagreeable. Yet

in architecture this is constantly done; and some, in their dreams of a novel style, have said, that the time may come when some great genius, joining the peculiar excellences of various styles, shall form an original and new system of design. The fact and the hypothesis may, I think, be demonstrated as equally wrong.

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ORNAMENTAL ART.

PALLADIO: LOUIS QUATORZE: LUDWIG I. OF BAVARIA.

THE lecture of Mr. Ralph Wornum, at the Government School of Design, on Friday evening in last week, related to the varieties or styles of decorative art which appeared in, or rather after, the Renaissance, of which a former lecture treated.

The more modern styles, said the lecturer, start from the Cinquecento. That classical revival led to a sort of pedantic cultivation of the antique by the leading men of the period. The great apostles of this classical pedantry were Serlio, Vignola, Palladio, and Scamozzi; and the great type of their style was the Colosseum.

Palladio, the greatest of these masters, built his taste on measurements of ancient buildings, and on the writings of Vitruvius, and Alberti—a principal master of the Renaissance. Palladio may be said to be the founder of the modern club-house style, of Italian architecture,—the Italian palace in its most finished character. The little town of Vicenza, between Venice and Milan, contains, in proportion to its size, many times more beautiful buildings than any other town in the world, and these it owes entirely to Palladio,—either actually designed and built by him, or at least by his followers or imitators.

In this country, at the same period, the great style was the Elizabethan, or "King James's Gothic," which, however, seems to have declined in the reign of the first James, and to have gradually given way to the Palladian or Seicento. Some of Palladio's imitators, indeed, surpassed him in individual examples. In this country especially,—as, for instance, did Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren, and Sir John Vanbrugh, who, in Whitehall, St. Paul's Cathedral, and Blenheim, all far surpassed their Italian model. Inigo Jones, after his second visit to Italy (1613-14), designed in no other style than Palladio's, though previously he had worked chiefly in the Elizabethan. The style of Palladio has been the prevailing taste in Europe for at least 200 years. From Inigo Jones to Sir John Soane, there was nothing else done in this country. Even Gothic repairs were carried on in this style, as in the west front of old St. Paul's by Jones, and in the towers of Westminster Abbey, and St. Mary's, Warwick, by Sir C. Wren. The pilaster-niche-and-urn-style was the most characteristic designation the lecturer could give it. It was impossible for him, however, to go into general details of the numerous works of this long period.

Of Sir C. Wren's works, he continued, I need say nothing, but simply refer to St. Paul's, perhaps the finest example of its style in the world. Wren never visited Italy, but he studied Palladio, and was doubtless greatly influenced by the works of Inigo Jones. The same may be said of Sir John Vanbrugh, the architect of Blenheim and of Castle Howard, and the third of the great triumvirs of this country in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Of the three, Sir John Vanbrugh was perhaps the most picturesque or ornamental designer. Sir Joshua Reynolds says of him, that he composed like a painter,—that he perfectly understood, in his art, what is the most difficult in painting, the conduct of the background, the secondary features, or accessories.

Of the more exclusive ornamentists, the most celebrated of all this period was Grinling Gibbons, by birth and descent like Sir John Vanbrugh a Dutchman, but naturalised in this country, the chief arena of his labours. He arrived here in the year after the Great Fire, at the age of nineteen only, and he appears to have been much employed by Wren in the execution of ornamental details. In carved decorations in wood, Grinling Gibbons is scarcely yet rivalled.